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Agenda item 21 (a)
Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Argentina, Bangladesh, Benin, Botswana, China, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russian Federation, South Africa, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Venezuela: draft resolution

International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991, the annex to which contains the guiding principles for the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations system, and its resolutions 52/12 B of 19 December 1997, 54/219 and 54/233 of 22 December 1999, 55/163 of 14 December 2000 and 56/103 of 14 December 2001, and recalling agreed conclusions 1999/1 of the Economic and Social Council[1] and Council resolutions 1999/63 of 30 July 1999 and 2002/32 of 26 July 2002,

Recognizing the importance of the principles of neutrality, humanity and impartiality for the provision of humanitarian assistance,

Emphasizing that the affected State has the primary responsibility in the initiation, organization, coordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory and in the facilitation of the work of humanitarian organizations in mitigating the consequences of natural disasters,

Emphasizing also the responsibility of all States to undertake disaster preparedness and mitigation efforts in order to minimize the impact of natural disasters,

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/54/3/Rev.1), chap. VI, para. 5.

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Welcoming the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction,

Stressing that national authorities need to enhance the resilience of populations to disasters through the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction so as to reduce risks to people, their livelihoods, social and economic infrastructure, and environment resources,

Welcoming the efforts of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme to strengthen the coordination of their activities in the field of disaster prevention, mitigation and management,

Emphasizing the importance of raising awareness among developing countries of the capacities existing at the national, regional and international levels that could be deployed to assist them,

Also emphasizing the importance of international cooperation in support of the efforts of the affected States in dealing with natural disasters in all their phases, including prevention, preparedness, mitigation and recovery and reconstruction, and of strengthening the response capacity of affected countries,

Welcoming the efforts of Member States, with facilitation by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and in cooperation with the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group, to improve the efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of international urban search and rescue assistance, and in this context noting its resolution 57/__ entitled "Strengthening the effectiveness and coordination of international urban search and rescue assistance",

Mindful of the effects that shortfalls in resources can have on the preparedness for and response to natural disasters,

1. *Takes note* of the reports of the Secretary-General on international cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development[2] and on strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations;[3]

2. *Expresses its deep concern* at the number and scale of natural disasters and their increasing impact, resulting in massive losses of life and property worldwide, in particular in vulnerable societies lacking adequate capacity to mitigate effectively the long-term negative social, economic and environmental consequences of natural disasters;

3. *Calls upon* all States to adopt, where required, and to continue to implement effective necessary legislative and other appropriate measures to mitigate the effects of natural disasters, inter alia, by disaster prevention, including building regulations and appropriate land use, as well as disaster preparedness and capacity-building in disaster response and mitigation, and requests the international community to continue to assist developing countries, as appropriate, in this regard;

4. *Stresses*, in this context, the importance of strengthening international cooperation, particularly through the effective use of multilateral mechanisms, in the provision of humanitarian assistance for all phases of a disaster, from relief and mitigation to development, including through the provision of adequate resources;

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[2] A/57/578.

5. *Stresses also* that humanitarian assistance for natural disasters should be provided in accordance with and with due respect for the guiding principles contained in the annex to resolution 46/182 and should be determined on the basis of the human dimension and needs arising out of the particular natural disasters;

6. *Recognizes* that economic growth and sustainable development contribute to improving the capacity of States to mitigate, respond to and prepare for natural disasters;

7. *Reaffirms* that disaster risk analysis and vulnerability reduction forms an integral part of sustainable development strategies and needs to be considered in development plans of all vulnerable countries and communities, including, where appropriate, in plans relating to the transition from relief to development, and also affirms that within such preventive strategies, disaster preparedness and early warning systems must be further strengthened at country and regional levels, inter alia, through better coordination among relevant United Nations bodies and cooperation with Governments of affected countries and regional and other relevant organizations with the aim of maximizing the effectiveness of natural disaster response and reducing the impact of natural disasters, particularly in developing countries;

8. *Emphasizes* the importance of enhanced international cooperation, including with the United Nations and regional organizations, to assist developing countries in their efforts to build capacities, to predict, prepare and respond to natural disasters;

9. *Stresses* the need for partnership among Governments of the affected countries, organizations of the United Nations system, relevant humanitarian organizations and specialized companies to promote training to strengthen preparedness for and response to natural disasters;

10. *Stresses also* the need to promote the access to and transfer of technology related to early warning systems and to mitigation programmes to developing countries affected by natural disasters;

11. *Encourages* the further use of space-based and ground-based remote-sensing technologies for the prevention, mitigation and management of natural disasters, where appropriate;

12. *Also encourages* in such operations the sharing of geographical data, including remotely sensed images and geographic information system and global positioning system data among Governments, space agencies and relevant international humanitarian organizations, as appropriate, and also notes in that context initiatives such as those undertaken by the International Charter on Space and Major Disasters and the Global Disaster Information Network;

13. *Stresses* that particular international cooperation efforts should be undertaken to enhance and broaden further the utilization of national and local capacities and, where appropriate, regional and subregional capacities of developing countries for disaster preparedness and response, which may be made available in closer proximity to the site of a disaster, more efficiently and at lower cost;

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[3] A/57/77-E/2002/63.

14. *Welcomes* the role of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat as the focal point within the overall United Nations system for the promotion and coordination of disaster response among the United Nations humanitarian agencies and other humanitarian partners;

15. *Also welcomes* the establishment of the positions of regional disaster response advisers by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs as well as the initiative of the United Nations Development Programme to establish regional disaster reduction adviser positions, and encourages the further development of these initiatives in a coordinated and complementary manner in order to assist developing countries in capacity-building for disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation and response;

16. *Encourages* further cooperation between the United Nations system and regional organizations in order to increase the capacity of these organizations to respond to natural disasters;

17. *Encourages* States that have not signed or ratified the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations, adopted at Tampere, Finland, on 18 June 1998,[4] to consider doing so;

18. *Invites* the United Nations system to explore further the concept of transitional recovery teams for providing assistance for bridging relief assistance and development cooperation;

19. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in collaboration with relevant organizations and partners, to continue progress on compiling a directory of disaster mitigation capacity at the national, regional and international levels as well as the Directory of Advanced Technologies for Disaster Response as a new part of the Central Register of Disaster Management Capacities;[5]

20. *Welcomes* the global review of disaster reduction initiatives coordinated by the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and emphasizes the importance of periodic review as means of discussing disaster trends, assessing policies aimed at mitigating the impact of disaster and offering examples of successful initiatives;

21. *Encourages* donors to consider the importance of ensuring that assistance in the case of higher profile natural disasters does not come at the expense of those that may have a relatively lower profile, bearing in mind that the allocation of resources should be driven by needs, as well as the importance of making efforts to increase the level of assistance for disaster reduction and preparedness programmes and for disaster response and mitigation activities;

22. *Requests* the Secretary-General to examine the overall situation regarding the mobilization of resources for response to natural disasters and to consider concrete recommendations to improve the international response to natural disasters, as necessary, based on his examination, keeping in mind also the need to address any geographical and sectoral imbalances and shortfalls in such responses where they exist, as well as the more effective use of national emergency response agencies, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session.

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[4] United Nations Treaty registration No. 27688.

[5] http://www.reliefweb.int/ocha_ol/programs/response/register.html.